



Daily Meditations May 13-18, 2019

The Biblical readings are taken from the Daily Office in the Book of Common Prayer for Year 1 and written by the St. Stephen's Meditation Writing Team: Judy Aronow, Dave Boyd, Pat Gillory, Jay Nickel, Bob Reed, T. Cay Rowe, Lisa Wilkinson, and Carroll Wilson.

Click on the scripture reading for each day to go directly to link.

COLLECT for Easter 4:

*O God, whose Son Jesus is the good shepherd of your people: Grant that when we hear his voice we may know him who calls us each by name, and follow where he leads; who, with you and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.*

Emulating the Olive Tree Monday, May 13, 2019

Psalm 41,52

"But I am like a green olive tree." - Psalm 52:8

The Psalmist and most of the other Bible writers used word pictures to tell their stories. One of the most familiar is in Psalm 23, where humans are depicted as sheep who regard the Lord as a good shepherd.

The image of a green olive tree was new to me and kept returning to my mind over and over. I began to think about it and wondered why it was so persistent. Gradually I realized its power lay in its truth. A false image would not have captured my imagination.

That led me to wonder what a green olive tree really looked like. It is not a spectacular tree, seldom growing taller than 50 feet, but it has very deep roots, is tough, and lives a very long time, sometimes several centuries. It flourishes in poor soil and clings to slopes and hillsides so it can be cultivated in areas where other plants will not grow. The leaves are silvery green, and the fruit can be very prolific. It has been cultivated for centuries for its useful fruit, which is a mainstay of the Mediterranean diet. The oil of the olive combines well with many substances, enhances flavor, spreads well, and can be easily preserved.

The more I thought about it, the more I realized what a valuable tree the olive is. I saw that its image is a good one to emulate. It is sturdy, tough, long-lived, and useful--qualities that are beneficial to all of us.

The next time I don't really feel like a sheep, I will switch my image to a green olive tree and see where that leads me. Change is the spice of life, you know.

The Cave Man is Obsolete

Tuesday, May 14, 2019

Psalm 47, 48

"He will be our guide forever." - Psalm 48:14

Forever is a long time, unimaginable really. So much of our world seems and feels and looks transient. There is little sense of permanence or security. Obsolescence is a tenet of prosperity: "Buy a bigger one, a new one, a better one."

We need something we can rely on, depend on, trust. Maybe we look in the wrong places. Things wear out and break down, even expensive things.

We need things to live in this world. The cave man is obsolete. However, we need to remember that things (money and power) are finite and cannot satisfy our need for stability. Only God lives forever.

Anything that is alive is in a constant state of change and transition. Otherwise it is dead. God changes, I believe, just as we do, but He is always there, or here, to put it more accurately. You can always depend on Him. He is trustworthy. Don't take my word for it. You need to prove it for yourself.

Try it! I am not suggesting that you test God. I am suggesting you test your ideas about God. Big difference! The Psalmist says, "He will be our guide forever." *Can you believe that?*

Pomp vs. the Only Non-corroding Gifts

Wednesday, May 15, 2019

Psalm 49, 53

"Man cannot abide in his pomp; he is like the beasts that perish." - Psalm 49:12

Pomp is a funny word, but it is quite impressive when properly used. Last year, we witnessed one of the world's greatest exhibitions of pomp in the wedding of Prince Harry of Britain and his bride, Meghan. Very impressive, very expensive, very fleeting. It is over and done and now resides in the history books.

In this Psalm, the writer is advising us that no amount of worldly pomp can save us from death. In that respect we are like the beasts. Whoever is born eventually dies. We all know this, but we spend much time and energy accumulating worldly treasure while forgetting that God holds the only gifts that do not rust or corrode--true life and peace.

In verse 15 the Psalmist reminds us that "God will ransom our soul from the power of Sheol, for he will receive me." We then remember that pomp seems very insignificant when compared to the welcoming arms of God.

God Bless You

Thursday, May 16, 2019

Psalm 114, 115

"May you be blessed by the Lord, who made heaven and earth." - Psalm 115:15

When was the last time someone said to you, "God bless you?" When you sneezed?

Probably, but that's a shame, isn't it? I feel that--even think that--often, but I almost never say it out loud. I wonder why that is true? Shy, embarrassed, too *goody-goody*? Probably all of the above.

If our love or regard for people prompts us to wish God's blessing on them, why are we reluctant to say it out loud? We have already made the request to God. We did that when the thought passed through our mind. You know, God knows it, but the person you love hasn't a clue. That's really too bad, isn't it?

I am going to be a bit braver and see what happens. *Join me?* God bless you.

He is not too busy

Friday, May 17, 2019

Psalm 40, 54

"Behold, God is my helper; the Lord is the upholder of my life." - Psalm 54:4

Independence is admirable, but sometimes we need help. As I age, I become more aware of this every day. Two important characteristics of a helper are skill and dependability. If your helper is ignorant or inept, you won't get much help. If he is too busy with other things, he is no help at all.

God has a pretty good track record. We know He is not ignorant because He created everything that is, and we still have not figured out some of it. Neither is He inept, as He keeps the entire universe in balance. Nor is He too busy. He tends to all; He hears each one of us and calls us by name.

He comes highly recommended. When you need help, ask Him. And don't forget to thank Him.

My Purpose, His Purpose

Saturday, May 18, 2019

Psalm 55, 138

"The Lord will fulfill his purpose for me." - Psalm 138:8

Many times I have prayed to God to fulfill my purpose or help me to fulfill my purpose. This verse does not say one word about *my* purpose. It promises that the Lord will fulfill *His* purpose. I'm pretty sure that many times my purpose and His were not identical. That may be why it seemed to me He was not keeping His promise.

If I could, or can, bring my purpose into line with His, I am sure His help would be there. It's the same old struggle: Who is boss, me or God? I know the answer but often forget it or distort it or repress it. Those tactics don't work. Take it from one who knows.

I am sure His purpose for me is far better than the one I see. There is much food for thought for me here. *How about you?*

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